UNCONVENTIONAL OIL AND GAS DEVELOPMENT AND HEALTH OUTCOMES: A SCOPING REVIEW OF THE EPIDEMIOLOGICAL RESEARCH was published online in the peer-reviewed journal Environmental Research, January 8, 2020.

This new review of 29 peer-reviewed studies finds that 25 of them report health impacts associated with exposure to unconventional oil and gas operations. The authors conclude that “… current research points to a growing body of evidence of health problems in communities living near UNG [unconventional oil and gas] sites,” much of which demands further study.


Environmental Health Concerns From Unconventional Natural Gas Development was published online in the Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Global Public Health, February 2019.

An overview of the public health and environment risks associated with shale gas development, which includes a detailed look at “14 original epidemiologic studies published in the scientific literature as of 2017 that have reported associations between proximity to UNGD and health outcomes.”

Steiner, Irena & Schwartz, Brian. (2019). Environmental Health Concerns From Unconventional Natural Gas Development. 10.1093/acrefore/9780190632366.013.44.

IN THE NEWS

AMERICA’S RADIOACTIVE SECRET

“Oil-and-gas wells produce nearly a trillion gallons of toxic waste a year. An investigation shows how it could be making workers sick and contaminating communities across America”

Rolling Stone, Justin Nobel, January 21, 2020
"As physicians deeply concerned about climate change and pollution and their consequences, we consider expansion of the natural-gas infrastructure to be a grave hazard to human health."

Philip J. Landrigan, M.D., Howard Frumkin, M.D., Dr.P.H., and Brita E. Lundberg, M.D.
The False Promise of Natural Gas, New England Journal of Medicine, January 9, 2020; 382:104-107,
DOI: 10.1056/NEJMp1913663

IN THE NEWS (Cont…)

“GOVERNMENT FAILED YOU” — PITTSBURGH STATE REP. DRAFTS BILL TO STOP RADIOACTIVE FRACKING WASTE (TENORM) FROM ENTERING PUBLIC WATERS

State Representative Sara Innamorato is drafting a bill to close a loophole that allows landfill leachate containing technically enhanced naturally occurring radioactive materials (TENORMs) in fracking waste from being discharged through sewage treatment plants into waterways.

Public Herald, Joshua B. Pribanic, December 10, 2019 | Project: Smoking Gun | Podcast: newsCOUP

IS SHALE DEVELOPMENT WORTH THE COSTS? A CMU STUDY SAYS NO.

In a study looking at air pollution resulting from shale gas development, Carnegie Mellon University quantified the negative health, environmental, and climate impacts from the industry and compared them with the employment benefits for PA, and found that the costs far outweigh the benefits.

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, December 8, 2019

PENNSYLVANIA TO FUND RESEARCH INTO FRACKING HEALTH DANGERS

After meeting with families affected by cancer from Washington County on November 18, 2019, Governor Wolf has announced he will fund two studies looking into public health impacts of shale gas development and specifically looking to see if there may be a connection between the industry and the rash of pediatric cancer cases in Southwestern Pennsylvania.

"Dozens of children and young adults have been diagnosed with Ewing sarcoma and other forms of cancer in a four-county area outside Pittsburgh, where energy companies have drilled more than 3,500 wells since 2008."

AP NEWS, Michael Rubinkam, November 22, 2019

SHALE GAS CONTRIBUTES TO INCREASE IN CARCINOGENS IN PA WATER SUPPLIES

The Environmental Working Group has recently updated its National Tapwater Database, which looks at contaminants in water supplies in the U.S. Pittsburgh and surrounding regions did not fare well. A contributing factor may be shale gas development waste entering the water supply.

“The new database also reveals that several cancer-causing contaminants are found at levels significantly higher than national and state averages in Pittsburgh’s drinking water.”

Environmental Health News, Kristina Marusic, October 23, 2019
Pregnant Women and Fracking: A Case for Special Concern, January 15, 2020

Pregnant women and their fetuses are particularly vulnerable to pollution from shale gas development. Understanding the risks and taking steps to minimize exposure are essential for protecting the health of mother and child.

Featured Research Reviews

- Researchers at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health studied the potential impact of shale gas development on asthma exacerbations between 2005 and 2012.
- Researchers from Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health published a study looking at the relationship between exposure to shale gas development, anxiety, or depression during pregnancy, newborn preterm birth, and lower newborn birth weight.
ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH MEDICAL TOOLKIT

If you suspect that your patient may be experiencing symptoms related to environmental exposure, you may want to inquire about their source of drinking water, proximity to shale gas development infrastructure, and municipal waste sites.

EHP’s Medical Toolkit contains a Survey for Patients’ Potential Exposure and ATSDR’s Exposure History Form that can assist you in working with these patients.

SHALE GAS and OIL HEALTH REGISTRY

If your patients are living in proximity to shale gas development and are experiencing symptoms that are not easily explained, and perhaps episodic, the cause may be related to environmental exposure to airborne or waterborne shale gas pollution. EHP has resources for your patients to track their symptoms and advice on limiting external environmental exposure within the home.

In addition, if the patient lives within 5 miles of shale gas development, they can take part in EHP’s national Health Registry. EHP has resources available to help people register and can provide your office with Health Registry postcards for your patients.

The Southwest Pennsylvania Environmental Health Project (EHP) is a nonprofit public health organization that assists and supports residents of Southwestern Pennsylvania and beyond who believe their health has been, or could be, impacted by shale gas development (fracking).

Services offered by EHP
- Medical ToolKit – Screening & Assessment Tools – Reference Materials
- CME/CEU Credits
- National Shale Gas & Oil Health Registry
- Latest health studies related to shale gas development

EHP defends public health in the face of oil and gas development.
We provide frontline communities with timely monitoring, interpretation and guidance.
We engage diverse stakeholders: health professionals, researchers, community organizers, public servants, and others.
Because knowledge protects health.

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